

Response to “Capture All the URLs: First Steps in Web Archiving”

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“[Capture All the URLs: First Steps in Web Archiving](#),” published in Volume 2, Issue 2 of *Pennsylvania Libraries: Research & Practice (PaLRaP)*, describes how archivists at Slippery Rock University, the University of Scranton, and Drexel University began archiving websites. In their introduction, Antracoli, Duckworth, Silva, and Yarmey (2014) define the scope of their paper as follows:

“Each of the authors’ respective institutions (Drexel University, Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania, and the University of Scranton) has taken action to meet the challenge of capturing and preserving Web content. In this article, we introduce basic concepts and tools related to Web archiving and then describe our first steps: partnering with Archive-It’s Web archiving service, obtaining buy-in and funding from our institutions, and selecting content for our collections. We also discuss more advanced steps taken at Drexel University, such as policy development and quality control, as well as future plans, from social media archiving to outreach and assessment” (p. 156).

Despite this explicit focus on early Web archiving work, the authors do not provide any information about the earliest Web archiving work at Drexel. Indeed, I worked at Drexel University as the Digital Archives Technician from August 2008 through September 2011. During this time, Drexel initiated its Web archiving program. I was directly involved with both the planning and implementation of Web archiving at Drexel, and my experiences differed from those reported by Slippery Rock and Scranton.

In late 2008, when I began investigating Web archiving options for Drexel, the landscape of available tools was significantly different. Archive-It was the only subscription service available; the California Digital Library’s Web Archiving Service was not yet available outside of California. I initially planned to use the open source Web Curator Tool and worked with the head of the library’s systems department to set up a test installation of the

software. When the software did not work as anticipated, he suggested looking into Archive-It as an alternate solution. Drexel started a free trial of the software, and I reached out to other Archive-It subscribers based in university archives to learn more about the service from the administrative user perspective. After Drexel committed to a yearly subscription, I regularly captured websites and created basic metadata. I also performed quality control of captured websites and used scoping rules to prevent unwanted websites from being captured.

The authors briefly mention my contribution to Web archiving at Drexel in the article but in a way that obscures the Drexel connection. According to the article, “a Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference (MARAC) presentation in 2011 by Rebecca Goldman of La Salle University confirmed the utility of Archive-It” (p. 160). As the article notes, La Salle’s Web archiving program did not even begin until 2012. I did begin working at La Salle in 2011, but the entirety of the presentation was explicitly about Web archiving and other work done at Drexel.

By omitting any mention of early work with Archive-It at Drexel, this article does not tell the full story of the first steps in Web archiving at that institution. It gives the inaccurate impression that the more advanced work described in the article, such as Drexel’s creation of a collection development policy for websites, is possible without the foundational work of convincing stakeholders of the importance of Web archiving, selecting a system, and conducting preliminary website captures. Although the authors were aware of my prior work with Web archiving at Drexel—even citing a presentation I gave on the subject—they did not consult me about my experience. The authors missed an opportunity to describe how an academic archives moves from starting to archive websites to developing formal collection development policies.

In online, open access publishing, I believe that it is never too late to set the record straight. I am grateful that *PaLRaP* has provided me the opportunity to share my story.

The Authors Respond:

We would like to thank Ms. Goldman for providing additional information regarding her work on Web archiving while employed at the Drexel University Libraries. The authors’ intent was to provide a practical perspective on setting up a Web archiving program based on their individual experiences at their respective institutions. Any omission of details related to Ms. Goldman’s efforts was entirely unintentional.

—Alexis Antracoli, Steven Duckworth, Judith Silva, and Kristen Yarmey